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# viewpoint

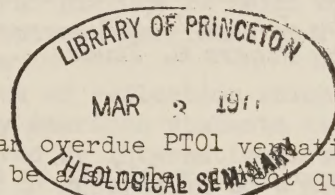
Number Four March Three

## STRANGERS IN A STRANGE LAND: REFLECTIONS ON BEING AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT

*(Larry Scott is a middler and a graduate of the University of Toronto. He is also secretary of the International Students Association.)*

by Larry Scott

What is it like to be an international student at Princeton Seminary? The question is asked of me and other non-Americans seminarians more frequently than we care to remember. Sometimes it crops up in the lunch line, at morning coffee break, during an impromptu dorm discussion, or even at that most sacred of seminary watering holes - the pub. The latter is probably the preferred place to pursue a comprehensive answer, especially if some pastorally-minded American student is buying the suds. But I must confess that the innocent "What is it like..." question is one which always leaves me uneasy. Is the person asking something on the level of a superficial "Hi, how are you?" which requires only a "Just fine (I'm going to tell you nothing)" kind of response? Or is he or she asking for a gutsy rundown of my innermost feelings, worthy of



recycling in an overdue PTOL verbatim? What seems to be a great question is in reality a multi-faceted problem. (You will recognize that this is an elementary principle of theology... otherwise known as Stroup's Law.) Depending on what level I choose to answer, I can play it safe or risk saying a few things that my well intentioned questioner did not bargain to hear. This is the tension between candor and politeness that confronts any international student who is called upon to communicate his or her feelings about being at Princeton Seminary. I claim no mandate to speak on behalf of all international students; the scope of such a task would intimidate even an ad hoc committee of Presbytery. But in the interest of creating some greater degree of understanding between American and non-American seminarians, I would like to share with you a few personal (and possibly irreverent) insights gleaned from my one and a half years on this campus.

The first and perhaps most obvious point to be made is that there is no such thing as a typical international student. I can portray a potpourri of various



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Editor: Douglas Brouwer

# viewpoint

students' perspectives on their seminary experience, but I cannot cite a definitive consensus. The reason is soon apparent when you realize that there are sixty international students from thirty-five countries here. A few are from Western nations, but most come from Asia, Africa, and Latin America. All of us find ourselves under the label of "International Students" when we arrive at Princeton Seminary. At first, this is the only common denominator that we have, but from this tenuous beginning grows the realization that our new environment is a source of a more substantive bond.

We are each here of our own free choice, but we are only partly here. That is, we have a commitment to study and share our talents in this community for a limited period, but one primary commitment is to return to our own society and carry our call there. Unlike our American classmates, we have no permanent ties or sense of abiding obligation to the society in which we live and study; in short, we are not Americans. The perspective we bring to this community is one of sojourners, who see Americans and American society through the eyes of our own cultural experience. No matter how much we enter into things, we feel a certain detachment because our real roots lie at home. The tension between how we see things and how Americans do, varies; for example, a Canadian does not experience the same degree of cultural shock as a Tanzanian. And yet each is reminded by a little piece of paper that he must carry, that he has the status of "resident alien," whether his home is a few hundred or a few thousand miles away. A sense of shared identity is there for all international students, because we are legal visitors and live in a society that is not our own. It is this simple fact of being a visitor in someone else's national household that underlies both the richness and the occasional despair of being an international student.

That international students have an identity at PTS is usually not regarded as a problem. What does concern some people is that a distinctive identity for international students leads to a sense of separateness from the seminary community. And all of us know the



feelings aroused around the seminary by the word "community."

Princeton takes pride that it has more foreign students than any other American seminary, but community contacts between Americans and non-American students continue to be minimal. I have heard many American students say to me that they don't know one international student. The implicit assumption is that international students must be leading separate existences and avoiding Americans. (To be fair, some American students see things differently and seek out students from other countries.) If international students and Americans do not appear to mix as thoroughly as a community therapist would like, this does not necessarily represent a negative judgment of one group upon the other. There are, however, some dynamics at work which do discourage interaction. First there is language. Most international students have a considerable degree of proficiency in reading and writing English, but some may find it embarrassing to speak with an accent--especially in initiating conversation with strangers. There is a natural shyness which arises when you are a minority in a foreign country and must use a second language to express yourself. Americans easily overlook this factor because they take proficiency in English for granted.

An additional factor is that most foreign students are in the Th.M. or Ph.D. program, and as such are several years older than the average American M.Div. student. It is natural to gravitate toward people of similar age and area of study. Furthermore, several international students have a spouse and family at home, and thus have more in common with each other, than they do with single students. Groups of international students tend to form at the dinner table because it is easier to relax among familiar faces than it is among new ones. This concern for a "non-energetic" mealtime is even more critical for some international

students because of the extra emotional drain they experience in having to study in a second language, or in studying long hours to make full use of their short time here, or perhaps in worrying about divided families.

Overall, you can see why it would appear easier for Americans to assume the initiative in meeting international students, than vice versa. International students may sometimes appear clannish, but if you really want to meet them, they are open to and appreciative of your interest. A number of American students have decided to make contacts with international students, and have enjoyed the experience immensely. And I'm happy to say that there are also international students who have worked hard to build a diverse circle of friends among both their peers and American students. But most people in the seminary do not take such initiatives after orientation week, and this is why the general picture is still one of noninteraction between Americans and foreign students.

One final area of reflection which seems to interest many American students is how they are perceived by international students. It is difficult to generalize in a meaningful way, but I'm going to attempt a few sweeping statements anyway. The first thing that strikes most international students is how little American seminarians know about other parts of the world. It comes as a surprise that the vast majority of Americans are quite unsophisticated in their awareness of the basic politics, geography and religion of the larger countries in the West (which are most similar to the U.S.), much less of those in Africa and Asia. This deficiency is readily evidenced by the naive sort of questions that one frequently encounters in the cafeteria. This state of affairs can in one sense be amusing, but it also means that the level of discussion between American and international students tends to be trite when it comes to significant world issues. Some international students become frustrated with such elementary exchanges and seek out discussion with other international students, or retreat into silence. (Of course, some international students have no interest in political discussions, and some Americans are refreshingly well versed.



I don't wish to overstate the situation.)

Frustrations can be aggravated when it becomes apparent that not only do American seminarians know little of other societies, but they sometimes give the impression that there could be little worth knowing about them. This attitude arises unconsciously because Americans generally tend to be very insular in their world outlook (for understandable geographic and historical reasons), and assume that the pinnacle of freedom, democracy, and social progress has unquestionably been achieved in America. This implicit belief is reinforced when there is no significant awareness of other possibilities that exist in other social systems. (Such an observation is admittedly less than complimentary; on the other hand, so many people have independently drawn the same conclusion that I don't doubt its accuracy.) An illustration of what I mean is apparent in questions like: Would you ever go back to your country (after living in a superior society like this one)? Do you think your country would ever move towards a democratic ideal (i.e. become more American)? Why do so many countries in your part of the world chose socialism instead of democracy (reflecting a peculiarly American belief that the two are mutually exclusive by definition, or that because other nations chose not to emulate the American political model, they must lack an understanding of what "democracy" is)?

International students also perceive a bit of paternalism in the attitude of American students toward them. This suspicion has some basis because most Americans seem to believe in the backs of their minds that the United States is a father figure (excuse the sexist language) for civilization, and that foreign students come here like offspring to be benignly schooled by the Great Master. The difficulty that some international

students have with spoken English tends to reinforce this image that is projected on them by some - although thankfully not all - American students. If it's any consolation, this well meaning paternalism is even more pronounced at functions put on for international students by nearby church organizations. (It is at times like these that one feels more like a PR ornament than a real person.) But I hasten to add that my colleagues are also appreciative of much genuine hospitality and concern among American students and lay church people. In fact it is the desire not to offend anyone's sensitivities that prompts most international students to say little about any negative aspects of their stay in America. Rather than be misunderstood or perceived as anti-American, it is safer to seek a low profile and be consoled with the fact that one's stay is relatively short, and should be savored for the whole breadth of what it has to offer - for both the joys and the sorrows. A guest may form opinions about his host, but does not presume to be ungracious to him in his own household.

What is it like to be an international student? No answer is adequate. I have not dwelt on the deep loneliness that inevitably arises for students who are far from spouse and children and native land. Nor have I mentioned the special moments of fellowship among international students--at a Christmas party, or prayer fellowship, or after-supper discussion--that can be high points of a seminary career. Being an international student means many unsaid things that are unique to each person. I have shared a few reflections, but they in no way do justice to the whole of my own or other international students' feelings about our experience at Princeton Seminary. Perhaps I have said enough if even a few more people have a little greater understanding of this Christian family, of which we all are mysteriously a part.



## SEXUALITY AND SPIRITUALITY

*(The following is the partial text of a speech delivered at Princeton Seminary December 3, 1976. Elisabeth Jameson Koenig is a recent graduate of the Seminary, who now lives in New York and is working on her Ph.D.)*

by Elisabeth Jameson Koenig

It is not easy to define either spirituality or sexuality. Let me just say that I believe spirituality has most to do with the relationship of our whole selves to God. And that sexuality has to do with the relationships we share with each other. Furthermore, I believe that the relationships between man and woman, between woman and woman, and between man and man have very much to do with the relationship of each of us to God.

Both our sexual natures and our spiritual natures give us great possibility for personal growth and identity and that is a good thing for everybody. But in order to grow, we require nourishment. We need spiritual nourishment and we need sexual nourishment. That, above any societal or moral consideration, is the reason why we must take care to see that we are choosing good spiritual food and good sexual food. That is not an easy thing to bring off. Our instincts are not as sure as the instincts of animals. They usually know how to eat what is good for them and how to mate with one of their own kind. But we are more complex. We have a spiritual nature and, if we believe the Judeo-Christian interpretation of our existence, we have been born into a state of sin. I see the last sentence as a description of what goes on among us. Sin can be described theologically, and it can be described psychologically.

Let's try to get at the effect of sin psychologically. Let me describe to you what I think goes on here in Princeton Seminary from the vantage point of being away from it for six months. I think that

The present speculation  
is quite inaccurate:  
God is not dead as planned.

We retired him, you and I,  
with engraved gold watch  
to keep time by.

He needed the rest.

Rumor has it that he now  
is incognito in Buenos  
Aires

among the oppressed.

In true professional spirit  
we continue his labor,  
trained to treat the symptoms,

leaving the disease

carefully intact.

And the phone  
is off the hook.

--Benjamin Williams



most of us who come to seminary are terrifically hungry for something. Some of us think we are hungry for God. Others are consciously yearning for closer human relationships. Some are hungry for power, and others for someone or something to take over their lives and tell them what they should do. Some of us have suffered from conflicting relationships with our mothers and fathers, or with our brothers and sisters and maybe we think that theological understanding will help compensate for that.

There is a lot of hungering going on in this community. Being hungry drives us to make projections on others. Projection is a term from psychology which means that we draw the deepest needs and fears out of our souls and see those needs and fears as being filled by someone "out there." We are all projecting all the time. It is an OK thing to do and it has a positive side to it in that its energy propels us into our life's work, into our marriages and relationship and into doing the things that delight us. But it also has a rotten side. It clouds our vision and makes us see qualities in a person that are not really there, or if they are there, they are only there in minute portions which are not for us and wouldn't be sufficient to satisfy our hunger if there were for us. That is why love is unrequited sometimes. A person projects a part of himself or herself onto another person and loves it there. But this is not really relationship, because it is not the other who is loved, but the imagined filled need or the projected part of oneself that is loved.

So our hunger propels us into a relationship that ends up starving us, and that makes us feel alienated from other human beings and from God. It is not that our beloved ones fill our need, but that our beloved can't fill it. This happens for instance when a young woman whose father has been distant falls in love with men who look as though they could fulfill the father need for her. They may be very insecure

themselves, but she will not see their insecurity if she is filled with longing. Or perhaps a man who is out of touch with his own life energy falls in love with a woman who is bubbling and full of life. He thinks that a relationship with her will compensate for his own lackluster, and well it might if she can respond to him.

There are many other forms of projection and many aversive projections which I haven't touched on. Just let me say that three years of seminary living enabled me to observe that the effects of projection are intensified here. We live together, worship together, go to class together, and eat three meals a day together. The constant exposure to each other and the intensity of the theological subject matter we deal with are enough to cloud almost anyone's vision. It is just plain hard to figure out what a person is all about when your need is so strong.

Why have I called projection sin? It is because it distorts the picture. The devil has, in fact, been known traditionally as a master of delusion. As long as we are projecting, we are not really experiencing the other person as other. We are seeing what we need to see. He or she is merely a part of our fantasy. Now here is where I see the connection between sexuality and spirituality. In the sexual relationship between a man and a woman each encounters a factor that is radically different. That is what our relationship with God is all about, too. In God we encounter one who is wholly other. If the difference between man and woman is properly met, with respect and with love, it will encourage the growth of both persons, and I think that it in some sense prepares us for relation with God. We feed each other through our difference from each other, and God feeds us through the difference between deity and humanity. As members of the body of Christ, we learn that we need the others. We are all deficient in some respects and we all have different gifts which when offered to the community will serve to nourish the others. And nowhere is this so apparent as in sexual intercourse



between a woman and a man. Of course, we can engage in it with the wrong person, at the wrong time, and then it does not nourish us. I think that it is wrong to the degree that it involves only a part of a person. There is a lot of talk about sexual intercourse being wrong if it is only for physical reasons. On the one hand, I wonder if it is possible to do such an intimate thing only for physical reasons. And I wonder something else. I wonder if, conversely, we might also say that it is wrong not to have intercourse if our spiritual relationship has really developed to the point that it requires the sexual expression, too. That may be a far-fetched notion, but I think regarding this we must be gentle with ourselves. There are worse sins than sexual ones. There are, for instance, sins which involve the spirit, like pride and despair.

My main point here is that our sexual nature is related to our spiritual nature because as we express ourselves sexually we are given the occasion to relate to otherness. That is part of the preparation for relationship with the one who is wholly other, God.

Our spiritual nature is nourished through our sexual relationship because it schools us in the activity which God requires of us the most. That is the act of paying attention. Nowhere else do we attend to another person with such clear focus as we do when we are engaged with that person sexually. I think that the time we are most nourished spiritually is while we are attending to God. And we get a glimpse of what spiritual nourishment is like through being sexually involved with another person. Time is of the essence for the task of paying attention. In Christ we are given the eternal God who entered the temporal order and became man. That means that our participation in time is raised to a new level. What we do in a moment is actually the matrix out of which who we are to become is born. It is in time that God feeds us, but we are only nourished when we open our mouths.

That is what attention is all about. It means devoting time to open our mouths to receive manna from heaven, taking time to chew it, to swallow it, and to digest it. Doesn't that sound similar to our experience in a sexual relationship?

Now, I do not mean to imply by all this talk of nourishment that that is the only thing God does with us. Not at all. Sometimes, in fact often, God withdraws from us, and we experience what St. John of the Cross calls the dark night of the soul. And sometimes God chastises us or challenges us. I do not mean to say that God is only like a big breast in the sky who nourishes us. Then, too, following the food metaphor I have used, we are led to the necessity of fasting. There is a time to abstain from food and there is a time to abstain from sexual intercourse. Paul says that the only time it is right for married people to do so is when it is time for prayer. There is a real need for us to make ourselves empty physically and psychically in order to make space for God.



## VACATIONING IN PITTSBURGH (OR, HOW TO SPEND 1.7 MILLION GENERAL ASSEMBLY DOLLARS)

*(Peter Nash recently attended a meeting of the Council of Theological Seminaries as a student representative of Princeton Seminary. Following are some of his observations of and reflections on that meeting.)*

by Peter Nash

Early last November I had the opportunity to represent Princeton Seminary students at the annual meeting of the Council of Theological Seminaries. The 1976 meeting was held at the Pittsburgh Hilton. The Council is a permanent committee of the General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. The function of the council is to evaluate the existing efficacy and develop the future of theological education in the UPCUSA. 1.7 million dollars of the General Assembly money will be used by C.T.S. during the next fiscal year. It is planned that Princeton Seminary will receive \$536,176 of that 1.7 million.

The Council is composed of the presidents, deans, a faculty representative, a board of trustees representative, and a student representative from each of the seven UPC seminaries (Dubuque, Louisville, McCormick, Pittsburgh, Princeton, San Francisco, and Johnson C. Smith in Atlanta). In addition to the seminary representatives there are eleven members from the church-at-large, both lay persons and clergy.

The entire council meets only once each year in the home city of one of the seven seminaries. During the year committees, which are selected by the whole council but, with the exception of the executive committee, exclude students from membership, meet periodically

to do the work of the Council. These committees plan the budget and "split" the G.A. financial pie among the seminaries, investigate possible avenues for theological education, examine the possibilities of union of UPCUSA and PCUS seminaries, develop programs for minorities and women's exposure. It is CTS which studies and restudies the validity of Bible content and ordination exams. Besides these responsibilities and finding other ways to gain financial support for the individual seminaries, the Council drinks too much coffee, eats too much food, appoints too many study groups, misunderstands itself too much and does all of the normal things one would expect a church committee to do.

Since I am not a Presbyterian, I was a slight bit shy when I arrived at the Pittsburgh Hilton. It was fortunate that I was because four of the other five delegates had a strange preconception of what a Princeton representative should be: three-piece suit, blonde hair, blue eyes and two suit cases - one containing clothes and books, the other, just books. I didn't fit the image and this spared me from being labeled as a smooth talking, money grabbing, establishment preserving, fair haired person from the East coast. Once I convinced the other students that Alex Getty does not supply each of us with the Porsche, Mercedes or Cadillac of our choice, we were able to get to some serious business. Representations of Princeton Seminary similar to the one found in a recent A.D. magazine article (Feb., 1977) may be partially responsible for the image many of us must "overcome" from time to time. The questions that those stereotypes raised for me are, Are those stereotypes based on any substantial information? and, Do I ever act in such a way that will perpetuate that image of "pressed out", intellectual, insensitive, book-balancing stalwart of the status quo who has all of the right answers to all of the wrong questions?



The ideas I took to Pittsburgh were formulated in part by Rose Catalano, Martin Bolton, Bill Humphreys (Princeton's 1974 representative), and various students of diverse racial background and of both genders; and, believe it or not, some of my ideas were my own.

Since none of us at Pittsburgh had ever seen any of the others before, we spent the first evening just getting to know each other and throwing some ideas around to get a "feel" for the group mood. Some of the things we talked about were common to all of the seminaries. Women's issues absorbed a good deal of the time. The effort to remove sex-exclusive language from the classroom and the pulpit seemed to be a wee bit weaker here than at the other seminaries. We spoke of an inability on the part of the seminaries to help us learn to deal with sexuality as Christians and as ministers of the Church. I thank Rob Stuart for his efforts this semester to fill that void with ET15. McCormick's representative pointed out the need for northern Presbyterian seminaries, agencies, and parishes to begin dealing with women as pastors, with the emphasis being that women should not be expected to become men internally in order to be pastors. In connection with this, the students felt the need for help in defining the pastoral role. Keeping in mind that pastoring is neither masculine nor feminine by nature, the group wanted the seminaries to help individual students to see more clearly how the pastor as a theologian is both a student and a teacher at the same time. The consensus at Pittsburgh was that the disciplines in seminaries are so sharply divided that students have several parts of a puzzle that they must try to piece together between graduation and ordination, and there is no assistance from the schools. Since November it has become more evident that part of the problem is that seminary faculties, especially Princeton's, are not regular practitioners of the pro-

fession for which they help prepare their students. One of the things for which the whole Council recognized a need is closer involvement of the faculties with the surrounding Presbyterian parishes. The council is investigating and urging more participation in lay education and extension courses from all of the seminaries. As always, money is a major problem.

We also noticed a lapse in minority recruitment. It seemed that as soon as quotas were filled, and students stopped pressing that justice prevail, the administrators felt comfortable in ignoring the need for full representation of all American ethnic groups. When I think of what I say it sounds malicious. As I reflect on the situation it occurs to me that the reason more Blacks, Asians, Native Americans, and Latinos do not come to Princeton is the same reason many Caucasians do not come here: Princeton does not have preparation for specific ministries as its goal. I admit only a trade school can teach a pupil all that he or she needs for a specific trade. Heaven forbid that Princeton Seminary should become that. But in its efforts to help prepare men and women for ministry Princeton has and continues to ignore the specific needs of special groups. Why should Latinos come here if they cannot be assured that they will find the resources that will help them deal effectively with their community? In short, the students in Pittsburgh agreed that the seminaries, with the exception of Johnson C. Smith, are directing the process of theological inquiry toward white, suburban parishes. According to Donald Smith of the UPCUSA vocations committee, white suburban churches are the only "job market" that is flooded.

We wanted the seminaries to stress life-style or life-styles with values that are different from that of middle class America's civil religion. As I write, I think of the amount of food I have returned to the dishroom to be disposed of because I just took too much or it just wasn't very good.



I wonder why a "success mystique" pervades Princeton, why the desire to "do well and live comfortably" lies in the back of each of our minds, and why this institution and its students are not at pains to correct the myth of comfortable Christianity. At Pittsburgh we asked ourselves if the Presbyterian Church and her agencies had not grown too comfortable.

Finally we sought community and spiritual depth coupled with outward social action. The caucus rejected the prevailing mood of shallow personal piety which extols the personal relationship aspect of the faith at the expense of the ministering and suffering aspect of pastoring. We asked, Why must it be an either or situation? Three of our sister seminaries share classrooms and some living facilities with seminaries of other denominations. Their representatives gave high praise for the benefits obtained from these relationships. They were all most impressed with the high level of personal devotion, astute social sensitivities, and willingness to speak out and act against oppression which they saw in the brothers who are members of Roman Catholic Orders. They posed the question for us, What is valid Protestant piety?

Unfortunately, after two and a half days of soul searching, gut spilling, prayer, and formulation of questions and proposals, at least at that meeting our questions went unanswered. Although we were included in all of the group meetings and had an opportunity to express ourselves to the members of the Council from the church-at-large, we never had an opportunity to speak with the presidents, the deans, or the faculty and trustee representatives in an official capacity. At the end of the final business meeting, the McCormick student stood and hurriedly voiced our concerns. After him another short report was heard and then the annual meeting and \$14,500 of the UPCUSA money were spent. We asked ourselves, Why did they ask us to come?

As nearly as I can figure it out, this is the reason they ask students to participate: The presidents know that there are problems in the seminaries other than money and they would like to see them corrected; they are not, however, superpersons or miracle workers. As upset as I was with the established order of things here and with what I learned at Pittsburgh, I must say that it is not only the fault of those who run the seminaries. We, the students, must share the responsibility of creating viable alternative modes of theological education; and we must work with and at the same time challenge the members of our faculty and administration. I think the singularly most upsetting thing for me at Pittsburgh was to find that all of the other students at least perceived themselves as being on a comfortable, first name basis with their seminary presidents and deans. Now, I will admit that how I address the president of the Seminary does not change our relationship, but I think all of us agree that we learn and work much more efficiently in a nonthreatening atmosphere. Many good ideas are lost in classrooms and committee meetings because Dr. Anybody hasn't taken the initiative to let us know that he or she respects us as individuals, as competent students, and as brothers and sisters in our redeemer Jesus the Christ. This would also lay a burden on us as well, the responsibility to respond to the confidence which our professors would place in us.

This is the type of change that cannot be administered from the top down, but it must come from a commitment by every person here to be responsible for the type of theological education he or she needs. Some things are basic to all of our programs and eventual ministries; but some of us will need more theology than others. Another person will need more pastoral care experience. Still others will need a better grasp of socio-political theories, and some will need a broad, general education. If the figures we



received at Pittsburgh are correct, most of us, no matter what our denomination, will not be placed in suburban parishes; many of us will be involved in yoked parishes and/or tent-making ministries; and all of us will need constant contact with the seminaries which are geographically near to us. If we accept this probability for the future rather than run from it, we must be the people who engineer the changes at Princeton Seminary. We must do it by taking an active, not a passive, part in our education. We have the biblical mandate to serve where we must be properly prepared; and to be properly prepared we must realize, in all humility, that our service to the church begins not with ordination but with baptism.

## GOOD CHRISTIAN GALS REJOICE

(sing to the tune of Good Christian Men Rejoice)

*Good Christian Gals Rejoice  
Cut your hair and change your voice  
Hear the Church's new decree  
With appropriate surgery  
You may now be priests  
You may now be priests!*

*A priest must always be a man  
Like Jesus, says the Vatican  
Or the laymen might begin  
To think that God is feminine  
And we know She's not  
And we know She's not!*

*This rule would cause embarrassment  
If carried to its full extent,  
All priests over thirty-three  
Would needs be slaughtered ritually.  
It would make a mess,  
It would make a mess.*

*And so, as has always been the norm,  
The Church, in true archaic form,  
Continues to discriminate,  
And keep the sexes separate.  
Christ was born for this?  
Christ was born for this?*

--by John Colligan

(This song was borrowed without permission from The Observer, a publication of the University of Notre Dame, and submitted for publication by M.Div. Senior Rosemary Catalano.)



## WINTER

by Robert O. Stuart

Not a day went by that I didn't look at that hillside.  
How it changed with the seasons...

but not so much as with the passage of time.

First big change that I remember was the hurricane of '38;  
blowed down the big pines...up there to the right,  
beyond the cemetery.

Cemetery? Yes, its right there at the end of the meadow...  
see where those young pine and hemlock are, inside the fence?

I remember the old wooden well pump...  
used to stand over there by that concrete tile,  
where the alders are...

Gory! had to use a high bench to reach it, stood so high.  
mostly used it for the cattle, but sometimes in the summer  
old Minnie came for water when her well dried;  
kept it fenced, she was so afraid of cattle.

And how I loved the cow lane that ran up the side of the hill  
and across the top--right where the hill meets the sky.

Used to be lined with maples, like a tunnel in the summer.  
See that one standing alone on the top of the hill?  
the only one left.

Too bad about the elm trees. Nothing but skeletons now.  
Thought that one next to the road would make it...  
what a shade tree that was! Old Woodbury had one  
of them glidder swings under it.

Now they'd like to spook you in the evening in the fall.  
Always was woods this side of the stream, running left along  
the bottom of the hill and out past the barn there.

Doesn't look like it now since they put that transmission  
line through. Gets so you don't notice it, but I did hate  
to see it cut up along the face of the hill,  
through the open meadow.

And meadow! Why that hill always grew the best hay!  
Northeast exposure, so it never burnt, even in the driest summers...  
Must be springs in it, too--  
that's why the well's so good.

You shouldh've seen it in the spring!

I never was a hand to tell flowers (though my mother could  
name them all), but I never seen a prettier sight.

There's always color on that hillside--nothing like it in the fall,  
especially when the maples were there.

Even has color in winter...snow's about every color there is,  
you know.

And seems like the sun just played on it all day--  
the first thing to flow in the morning; and when everything else is dark  
and the stars are shinning, it'll still be pink right along the top,  
especially on the coldest days.

And you know one think I love? --never told this to nobody 'cause  
it seems kind of silly, maybe.



After a storm this high land seems to clear before it does  
 off to the south; in the evening the low hanging clouds  
 off in the low country stand out like mountains  
 just above the horizon of the hill and bordered  
 by the clear sky and with just a touch of pink  
 Always did love mountains. Always liked to pretend, too.

One thing I thought never would change:

There was a great big rock down there where the alders are.  
 No matter what the season it always stood out;  
 even in the winters with the deepest snow, when you couldn't  
 see anything else on the hillside (until they put the power  
 poles in), the rock was there.

Well, some winters the freeze comes early, and if its been a wet  
 fall the well ('cause of the spring) overflows and makes the  
 nicest little skating pond--close to the road  
 and easy to get to.

One winter not too long ago the pond froze up good,  
 and we had the longest, coldest spell I can remember.

The rock was covered with snow and ice so's it looked like that  
 mountain at Bar Harbor.

One night a young couple were skating on the pond.  
 It was so cold it's a wonder they were even out.

Guess they decided to build a fire.

They lit it at the base of the rock, just below where it  
 hung over the pond--guess they thought it'd hold the heat.

Well, they built one hell of a fire, and it split that rock.

The big overhanging piece fell on the fella and crushed him.

Guess that goes to show you: Things that stand big and strong  
 and unchanging for so long still have things going on inside.

They seem unbending, but they get brittle...

hidden faults get bigger...

all it takes sometimes is a fast change,

like a lot of heat: can't melt so it shatters...

Like some people who seem big and hard,

who don't ruffle on the surface when others are all flustered...

They get cold and brittle;

hidden faults develop.

When something does get to their emotions--

and its got to be heat--

they like as not come all apart.



## AN EDITORIAL

*(Douglas Brower is the Editor of Viewpoint. He is not Presbyterian.)*

by the editor

One Saturday morning several weeks ago I paged through every Viewpoint of the preceding thirteen years. Those yellow and somewhat dog-eared copies revealed a fair number of interesting details about Princeton Seminary. As I read I did not feel a mystical oneness with any of my predecessors, though at times I empathized with an editor's anguished plea for more contributions. Some findings were quite predictable. For instance, issues from the Vietnam War years included long discussions on pacifism, just war, and even the old IV-D exemption.

Other findings were surprising. Contributions were, on the whole, articulate and diverse. Daniel Migliore, Charles West, and even George Hendry actively joined the discussion on war and the theological student's responsibility toward it. J. Randall Nichols, then a student editor, contributed articles on every subject from the war and summer field experience to proposed changes in the "refectory"--a widely used and more delicate term for our "cafeteria." Also surprising was the number of issues produced in a single year. Viewpoint was then a fortnightly.

Viewpoint has seen better days, its best days now gone and presumably catalogued forever in Speer Library--main floor, west, if any care to look them up. Reading those old issues predictably caused me to reflect a bit and helped me to square away some impressions that have been accruing now for several months. Editing Viewpoint is not a thankless job. I rather enjoy it. Somehow it fits well with some of my interests and career ambitions. The small stipend is nice. And I like to see

a finished product every once in a while (I prefer immediate gratification to the deferred variety).

But the conclusion that Viewpoint has endured its better days still holds true. I happen to think, however, that the graphic format of previous years of Viewpoint does not hold a candle to the product this year in terms of overall attractiveness and organization. Such cosmetic changes still do not hide the declining level of either writing ability or simple willingness to discuss current issues. Issues of Viewpoint during the Vietnam War years were literally filled with what looked like unsolicited contributions and letters to the editors (until recent years, Viewpoint seems to have had an editorial staff, rather than a single editor).

If the accept/reject ratio of contributions was pretty much the same as it is today (and that's a modest assumption), then I suspect that previous editors were well blessed with such unsolicited material--and hence free to choose from among the best contributions for actual publication. By contrast, through the four issues of Viewpoint published this year I have not received one letter to the editor, not even one critical response (written) to anything that has been published.

The reason for this is not, I judge, because the articles until now have been so innocuous that they deserve nothing more than a singularly uninspired "ho-hum." As a matter of fact, I think that some pretty outrageous things have been written in these pages. One example might be the film review last issue by Peter Bauer. Readers could have taken him to task on two rather significant points: one, he reviews the best female film director in the world today and says nothing about her feminist statement through film; two, he points out what he believes to



be Wertmuller's theological statement (that of jarring paradox) and then refuses to make a judgment about that statement as part of the reviewer's task.

Not a single critical response. On the whole, there is little discussion at Princeton Seminary. (I am thankful to the person who first conceived of the idea of Viewpoint. If the title had been "Dialogue," for instance, it could not have justifiably existed after 1970.) I am not sure why the seminary is dull. In cynical moments, I imagine that it is because too many of us are only interested in knowing where another person is coming from rather than in knowing the truth about something. Part of the disease--and certainly not part of the cure--are the small, alternative publications that mysteriously appear. Voices in the Wilderness is more of a hindrance to further discussion than an aid. If its name is not the ultimate pretention, then certainly an anonymous editorial staff is. How does one reply to a publication which not only fails to solicit replies but deliberately withholds the names of the people who sponsor it? Moreover, the manifesto language in the most recent issue--a steady stream of normative statements, bumper to bumper, most of the time without any grammatical, logical, or contextual flavor--was quaint and yet somewhat offensive. Voices in the Wilderness makes no progress; it is actually several giant steps backward.

My denomination, the Christian Reformed Church (recently described by Pauline Kael in the New Yorker as a "zealous Calvinist sect"), prefers that its divinity students study at its own seminary. But, wishing to study under the theological giants at a more glamorous seminary, I came east. Now, after more than a year and a half, I still like to study under the giants--and it's neat to be able to read the Times every day--but eventually I'll return to the midwest, to my zealous, Calvinist, and sectarian friends (so much for where I'm coming from). Even now, though, I

read my denominational magazines rather wistfully. There, it seems, people are struggling with the issues and seeking to know the truth about things. There, it seems, the letters-to-the-editor columns are bulging and bristling with ideas and creative discussion. There, it seems, people talk to each other and not past each other. My "sectarian" friends can argue as if there were no tomorrow. I cannot claim some of the same things for Viewpoint. I don't even find some of the same give-and-take in Theology Today, despite the latter's larger budget, the impressive-looking editorial council, and the admittedly more substantial contributions.

But my interest here is Viewpoint and Princeton Seminary, not mainline Protestantism or even Theology Today (although I have thought occasionally of getting together a parody issue of Theology Today, called, perhaps, Eschatology Today). The question that must be answered here is, Did I waste my entire Saturday morning in Speer Library when I could have been in my room watching the "Creature Feature" on channel 9? Or, more pointedly, Can Viewpoint's existence as a "forum for frank and creative discussion" be justified any longer? I think it cannot. There is little frank and creative discussion on campus and even less in Viewpoint (and still less in Voices in the Wilderness), even though the leaders of each campus group and organization were notified at the beginning of the year that space was available in Viewpoint for their views. Viewpoint has become, instead, a bulletin board for good sermons and for previously unpublished poets. It is a burden for the duplicating folks in Hodge Hall's basement, and, according to the Seminary Handbook, it ranks lowest in the order of printing priorities. It has also produced a small comedy of bureaucratic maneuvers merely to gain access to a typewriter with a carbon ribbon.

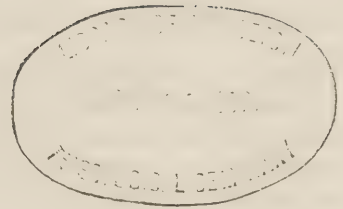
What, specifically, am I suggesting? A return to Vietnam-era mentality? Certainly not. Not many of us would seriously want that now. A discontinuation of Viewpoint altogether? Yes, preferably. Rephrasing the paragraph in the Handbook on Viewpoint



would only delay the inevitable end for a few more years. Actually, the sturdy new bulletin board in the Campus Center, though graphically it is a bit dull, provides all that is really needed. What, with no deadlines and no threat of editing (tampering in the minds of most contributors), every bitter prophet on campus could anonymously bare his or her empty soul. Poetry is a different matter. Perhaps... no, it wouldn't work.



# viewpoint



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## QUAIL IN THE WILDERNESS AND OTHER FOWL COMPLAINTS

I am tired of the quail who long  
for the fleshpots of Egypt not knowing  
that they themselves are to be eaten.

I am tired of revolutionary pigeons  
with their heads off cooing that the  
guillotine has taken them by surprise.

I am tired of chickens fresh from the  
plucking machine who just dropped in,  
find themselves naked, but march on  
to the frying pan.

I am tired of geese who have been  
turned into pillows which continue to  
honk.

I am tired of collared ducks who  
are waiting to be declared an endangered  
species.

I am tired of mockingbirds who have  
no call of their own.

I am tired of Christmas-tree ornaments  
who think they are birds and call for  
dialogue.

I am tired of sympathizing with all  
the turkeys whose necks deserve to be rung  
simply because they are gobblers.

I am so tired that shooting birds  
is not the fun it used to be, so tired  
that I weep at my typewriter trying  
to hear my own song, so tired of the  
cacophany of the game preserve that I  
long to return to the wilderness.

--Stephen Holloway

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## LESSONS FOR REVOLUTIONARIES

*(Robert Coke Hill McClure is a native of Berkeley, California, and a graduate of Dartmouth College. Readers are reminded to refer again to the disclaimer printed, as usual, on page three).*

by Robert Coke Hill McClure

Do you believe we are living in a pre- or post-revolutionary era? This is a question I have asked several people throughout my year at Princeton Seminary. And to this date, with few exceptions, the responses reveal an absence of critical analysis, reflective thought, and even interest in revolutionary dogma and ideology embodied in Christianity and Marxism. Moreover, among those who are vocal and seemingly concerned with liberation issues, fuzzy thinking and indefensible theological pronouncements predominate. In this short essay, I discuss how and why the writers for Voices in the Wilderness and Professor Richard Shaull must be advised to review those lessons that are common knowledge to all revolutionaries, lest they discover they are actually counter-revolutionaries. The 750 students at Princeton Seminary have decided to invest themselves in an ongoing theological enterprise and are coping in any way they can, by protesting, by complaining, or by silently tolerating the rigidity. But, more importantly, each one here is involved in a theological experience that closely parallels the training of revolutionary cadres. We should begin to recognize that each person at Princeton is becoming a revolutionary for the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Confronting people in the hope of correcting bad ideas, false theories, and reactionary tendencies is a difficult task and a long lost art. And I have been guilty of failing to act with grace and understanding. I was present at the Women's Center

when the paper entitled "Why Women were Excluded from the Old Testament Covenant" was read. I regret very much that the author of the paper interpreted the spirited debate after the reading as a direct attack upon her sexuality. That was not the intent of anyone present.

The discussion of the author's thesis did reveal that women were badly treated in the times of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and, as well, in the later covenants. Women were raped; they were treated as property under the legal system of God's chosen people. And the author emphasized that women were often unable to participate in the cultic ceremonies. These facts are well known to the sensitive reader of the Old Testament. The following quotation from the Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, under the listing "Woman," summarizes the author's presentation:

The function and status of woman in the Bible are strongly influenced by the patriarchal form of family life which prevailed. Woman's principal function is performed in her role as wife and mother. In this connection she makes her sexuality available to her husband for his pleasure and for reproductive purposes. As a mother she sustains a relationship to children which involves their care and nurture.<sup>1</sup>

The author of the paper assumed that when these shocking facts were brought to light they would automatically prove her thesis that women were excluded from the Old Testament covenant. But the paper failed to articulate how the facts proved her thesis. It lacked a logical or comprehensible methodology other than raw Biblical data. She violated Rudolf Bultmann's first thesis for exegesis of biblical writings: "The exegesis of the biblical writings, like every other interpretation of a text, must be unprejudiced."<sup>2</sup> She did not define the term "exclusion", or how women were specifically excluded from



the covenant communities; was it a partial or total exclusion? Moreover, the author refused to clarify these questions even in the discussion afterwards, adding confusion to an otherwise intelligent and illuminating debate.

I maintained then as I do now that the facts prove women were included in the covenant communities. The woman's function as wife and mother did not preclude frequent involvement in the political, military, and socio-economic life of the community. The IDB, which I quoted above, continues,

In her wider relationships which extend beyond the family, a woman takes part in the economic and social life of the community and in its political and even military affairs. She shares also in the religious life of her contemporaries, both in the home and in the tribe, city,<sup>3</sup> or national community of worship.<sup>3</sup>

This well-substantiated position undermines the author's thesis; moreover, this side of the issue was never considered or even mentioned in the paper. Now some may allege that the IDB is a product of a white middle-class, male-dominated society. That may be true, but the fact remains that the evidence presented in the IDB grapples with all the exegetical evidence pertinent to understanding woman's role in the Old Testament covenants. The author made no apology for this critical oversight.

The paper began with a survey of exegetical material collected from the covenants beginning with Abraham. In order to enhance her point that women are intrinsically estranged from men, the author eloquently referred to Adam and Eve as the archetypal man and woman. She was saying essentially that the "I-it" relationship shared by Adam and Eve is fundamentally identical to the relationships under the series of covenants established by God. The author failed to consider that the

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*Viewpoint*, a publication of Princeton Theological Seminary, is an informal journal, a forum for frank and creative discussion. The publication of comments, opinions, poems, or sermons should not be construed as agreement or endorsement by the editor, student body, faculty, or administration. In particular, no one, unless he or she expressly states, speaks in the name of any school, church, person, or group of persons. Unsolicited manuscripts, when they are received, will be given due consideration as expeditiously as possible.

Editor: Douglas Brouwer



covenants and the subsequent covenant communities developed precisely to heal the scars of estrangement separating God's people from communion with the Creator and with each other. The fall symbolizes the fallen state of God's people while the covenants initiated the ascent of men and women to where they could begin to overcome the burdens and results of sin. These ideas originate from Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, The Future of Man, and my own undergraduate work in New Testament exegesis; it is the "yet and not yetness" of the kingdom of God, the new covenant, as interpreted by Paul in Galatians 3:23-29.

Those who have no ears to hear are often those who mock the words of the minority who claim to possess an enlightened perspective. They do not fully realize, however, that some have progressed past a simple zealous embryonic stage typified by many new converts to liberation thought. Unfortunately, they are obstructing more substantive revolutionary thought in which the church of Jesus has been engaged since Judas betrayed our Lord.

Just as the impact of a good sermon is neutralized if the message does not correspond with what is personally known about the preacher, the prophetic voice within any thesis is rubbish if its intent is destructive and if it fails to edify. In the "introduction" to Paul Tillich's work, A History of Christian Thought, Carl E. Braaten writes,

The prophet hopes to get to the heart of the matter with his knife of radical protest; the false prophet is known in the tradition as one who cuts out the heart itself.<sup>4</sup>

The thesis that women were totally excluded from the Old Testament covenant is not a true radical Christian position; rather, it is merely a radical position. Because the paper was written for a course taught by a seminary professor, I would have

hoped that more substantive ground could have been given to the argument. But we must not fail to distinguish between radical overstatements and the accurate prophetic voices articulating the place for righteous indignation and demanding that wrongs be righted. I firmly maintain that overstatement, particularly in a piece of scholarship, has a lasting place only in the works of parody. And the subjection of women in the Old Testament and in our society is no laughing matter.

To speak of "lessons for revolutionaries" is pertinent to our life here because Princeton has a fair share of concerned revolutionaries. Professor Shaull is one; President McCord is another. When Professor Shaull delivered his inspiring, but less than substantial, address in Miller Chapel on February 9, 1977, he presented his guidelines for the place and work of a messianic community; and yet, he never defined what these terms meant to him. He did, however, redefine his job description to include preparing men and women for this radical approach to ministry. I will discuss later why he did not need to redefine the gospel into a seemingly revolutionary ideology. Christianity is simply a revolutionary movement, if one has an appreciation for the transcendent will of God. Professor Shaull has never clarified whether or not a transcendent Christ is necessary to carry out his political program. The socialist interpreter of the French Revolution, Alfred Cobban, puts it much better,

This tendency of the Marxist theory of the revolution to culminate in some sort of semi-religious exaltations is far from being an accident. Marxism is a philosophy of history; its strength is that, like all philosophies of history, it embodies a view of nature and ends of human existence. In other words, it is a sort of secular religion...<sup>5</sup>

In his debate with Professor Jurgen Moltmann Professor Shaull spoke of the need for a new stylistic and creative approach to liberation Christian thought. To do this,



Professor Shaull has neglected a solid classical approach towards scholarship and has failed to ground his ecumenics in substantive biblical theology. His Christian revolutionary thought is without substance because he has cut himself off from the transcendent.

Unfortunately, Professor Shaull has forgotten that all successful revolutions have distinct programs by which the expectations of the people conform to their desire to conserve the "good old days." The peasants who rioted in France, Russia, and China during the seventeenth century were not concerned with utopian promises. I do not want to imply here that divinity students are peasants. But rather that the French peasants fought to have reasonable prices and amounts of bread available even in the midst of the plagues; in Russia, the most prevalent cause of disorder was among those peasants who desired that the "true csar" be restored to power; the Chinese revolted in times of catastrophe when the foundations of their political-religious system were most threatened and when food supplies were scarce and costly. Historically, revolutions are caused by those who hope to return ultimately to a long desired status quo. Mao promised and secured the glory and the purity of China by removing all corrupting Western influences from the mainland until Nixon. China in the twentieth century has regained the self-respect that has been lost since the Ming dynasty. In saying that he is like "Abraham going out where he knows not," Professor Shaull ignores the need to establish a comprehensible continuum (at least in his rhetoric) between the "golden age passed" and the miserable present situation. That is why an accurate understanding of classical theology, church history, etc., taught here is so vital for the Christian thought that truly revolutionizes.

Christianity that is rooted in sensitive scholarship embodies these elements of revolutionary ideology. The Christian, furthermore, is encouraged to renounce the corruption of the world, convert to a new mind and to a new heart, and influence others to join the "elect." In other

words, we continue to become transformed and reconciled to ourselves, our neighbors, and our God in order to conform to the revolutionary requirements of our Messiah. Religion, or if you prefer "doing theology," is both a conservative and a revolutionary endeavor. We remember the glory and the victory we have in Christ to transform the present. Moreover, theological education is rigorous, demanding, and is an essentially radical program of mind transformation.

The most successful revolutionary here is not Professor Shaull but President McCord. When Professor Shaull was enjoying the adoration and praise of his timely chapel address, President McCord shrewdly and unhesitantly went over and shook hands with Professor Shaull thereby reminding all present that Richard Shaull's authority does not rest within himself but rather within his relationship to Princeton Seminary. Professor Shaull is paid to be the counter-revolutionary and is retained for that purpose by the Board of Trustees. I am glad he is here. President McCord understands the dynamics of theology; he knows how to control and to channel the revolutionary ferment that enlivens and sustains the true revolutionary movement that continues to preach and to act upon the promises of the kingdom of God, established on earth by the original revolutionary, Jesus of Nazareth.

In conclusion, the answer to the question, "are we living in a pre- or post-revolutionary era" is very complex and demands clarifications. However, if one is speaking about a Marxist revolution or at least something similar, one may dare to say that there are signs that the First and Second Worlds are emerging into a post-revolutionary era. The Third World is still very much in a pre-revolutionary stage. For the most part, Christianity has survived partially intact and will continue to survive through the post-revolutionary era. But the new question we face is, What type of Christian faith are we going to preach in this emerging post-revolutionary era? Is it one that interprets Jesus in the light of Marx's brilliant manifesto, even with the limitations of sociological thought? Or is it one that will remain true



to a biblical theology, one in which people will be exhorted and challenged to conform to the Scriptures and to obey the transcendent will of Jesus Christ while also borrowing the keen insight of Marxists and secular political scientists. I prefer the latter course. I think a revision of our revolutionary and enlightened pronouncements is long overdue. Only by developing sensitive means of confronting our brothers and sisters in love when ideas and theories need to be corrected and sharpened by the tools of solid scholarship can we fully communicate the "good news" and act compassionately and effectively in light of the gospel. Only the Christian faith can truly revolutionize our lives and the entire world about us.

When Lenin first heard the news of the Bolshevik outburst in what is now Leningrad, he was in Zurich, Switzerland. Instead of rushing to Russia on the next train to help take up arms with the people in the streets, he is said to have gone to the public library in Zurich in order to study the revolutions of past centuries to determine what the next best move would be to complete successfully his program against the Czar's government. When you get word of the future revolutions, come to the reading room of Speer Library. You will find me studying.

#### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, Vol. 4 (Abingdon Press, New York, 1962), p.865

<sup>2</sup>Rudolf Bultmann, Existence and Faith "Exegesis without Presuppositions?" (Fontana Library, London, 1961) p.349

<sup>3</sup>Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible vol. 4, p. 865

<sup>4</sup>Paul Tillich, A History of Christian Thought, introduction by Carl E. Braaten: "Paul Tillich and the Classical Christian Tradition", The Radicalism of Paul Tillich (Simon and Schuster, New York, 1967) p.xiii

<sup>5</sup>Alfred Cobban, The Social Interpretation of the French Revolution (Cambridge at the Univ. Press, 1964) p.11

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the Editor:

About Viewpoint. I have no expectation that one letter will serve as a complete antidote to an advanced case of cynicism but I thought that I might pass along some thoughts anyway.

Your recent editorial made one fine point when you said that there was little discussion at Princeton Seminary. I agree and recognize with sadness my own participation in that silence. What was particularly striking about your editorial, however, was from that point on it moved into rather pointless musings about bulletin boards and poetry. Couldn't you have put into circulation your own ideas about why there is as little discussion as there is? Your editorial might have had some substance if you had. Do the demographics of the seminary discourage discussion and involvement - Paul had a point about marriage. Does the seminary's theological understanding of its task pose the problem? Its understanding of itself? How about the free flow of information on campus? Peter Nash speaks of a commitment by the students to be responsible for the type of education that they receive; is there a failure of commitment at that point? Your struggle with Viewpoint is obviously only a reflection of what is a larger problem. My sense of the matter is that all I have mentioned contributes to some degree to the malaise, and I am sure that there are yet more.

I am not surprised that you haven't received more responses to the material in Viewpoint. Very little of what has been published this year cries out for an immediate response. This is not to say that what has been published has not been of value--much has. For instance, the articles by Larry Scott and Peter Nash in the most recent issue. And Walter Lawn--bless his departed soul--added some snap to the venture with his various contributions. Only John Wilbur's contributions, especially when he dared to write similarly for Voices, stirred in me the need for a response. How in the world does he get the idea that academic work somehow

undercuts the idea of both community and service. An academic load badly handled, yes, but not necessarily. He forgets that many of us left the possibility of both service and community specifically to enter an academic program. The challenge for the individual is to integrate the study into his or her ministry. John, among others, has helpfully identified some serious problems, but nowhere has a comprehensive move to a real solution been articulated for the seminary community as a whole nor do I see it being enacted. It seems to me that a responsible and Christian point of departure is a clear recognition that we are all sinners.

There are the beginnings of serious and open dialogue on campus. I hope some of it makes its way to the pages of Viewpoint.

Sincerely,  
Woody Bowman

(FOR MY ROOM-MATE)

Wishing (weakly thinking)  
For a southern comfort sunrise  
Instead of this bloodshot blight,  
His weeping, sleeping dead body  
Twisted and curled  
Like clothes dropped on the floor  
Or thrown over a chair,  
As he sought in the day unfurled  
The missed rest of the night past.  
His sunsorrowful eyes  
Bore bloodstains of the sacrifice,  
Mourning hours of sleep lost.

--Matthew T. Sharp

To the Editor:

As a past editor of Viewpoint I have had great empathy with your situation this year. Even while in Oxford--which seems to be our retirement home since my predecessor was also there--I was able to peruse your pages with interest. Thus I speak from a senior position concerning your last editorial in which you call for a discontinuation of this publication.

You deserve high compliments, Mr. Editor, for your talents and quality of issues; and in no way should you be criticized negatively for the recommendation of termination. Knowing the situation of Viewpoint last year, I thought you would be searching for a phoenix among the ashes when you became editor. You have done a fine job of cleaning the fireplace, perhaps even of polishing the andirons, but the phoenix was not to be found.

I therefore support your recommendation, but reluctantly.

Viewpoint served an important function once upon a time, as your research into past issues revealed. But why has it fallen from its power? If you will pardon me, Mr. Editor, my Unitarian heritage believes scripture might assist in answering this rhetorical question. In Leviticus 17:14 it says: "For the life of every creature is the blood of it." I almost wonder if literary leukemia has invaded the Seminary, this theological creature. We are so concerned in having our voices heard that we no longer expend the energy to listen. A viewpoint is much more important than a voice. And I fear, Mr. Editor, that the death of this publication will mean the creature called the Princeton Theological Seminary will lose a few more of its precious blood cells.

Yet I am addressing more than the immediate danger of losing Viewpoint when I speak of literary leukemia; theological leukemia also seems a problem threatening the life of the creature. There are serious theological problems which need to be critically considered on this campus. So many issues are being tackled by the Pharisees, including myself; and we need a few tax collectors to remind us of our sins.





Viewpoint had many sins, and maybe this was its gift; its death will bring no comfort to those people seeking to understand the theological ramifications of sexism, racism, and the personal problems involved in a theological education.

Metaphorically speaking, we are each a cell in this overall creature called Princeton. The probable death of Viewpoint serves as a clinical sign that the creature is in trouble. I pray, Mr. Editor, that I am wrong.

Faithfully yours,

Jonathan Sinclair Carey

To the Editor

Inspired by the moans of the less than "zealous" and (judging from his preference for "immediate gratification") less than "Calvinist sectarian" editor of this publication, I write to put a little of his long sought after truth in this, possibly Viewpoint's omega, issue. I also write to provide him with a "critical response," if only to my own fatuous first-semester article. Doug had at one point thought that it would be nice to have all four of the juniors who wrote back in September write year-end mini-milestone or "how my mind has changed" articles. Unfortunately, one of us has left the seminary, and the rest of us have thought seriously of following him--though Barbara and I may at least go down with the Brouwer Viewpoint.

In fact, however, I'd like to take Doug's own lament as an example of this Seminary's malaise. Nevermind the complaining and self-pity that he, like one-half of the seminary, exudes in small but persistent quantities. No, the problem can best be illuminated by adapting a comment Dr. Dowey made in CHOI regarding Martin Luther and the medieval sacramental system, "If one were to take it seriously, one would despair." It is my considered suspicion that if one were to take this seminary seriously, one would despair. Look at Brouwer--he took Viewpoint seriously, and think back to his last editorial, "I am not sure why

the seminary is dull" and then some jealous (not zealous) ranting about Voices in the Wilderness.

As for this ranting (about a publication that at least has some life), it leads me to dwell a bit longer on Brouwer-as-microcosm of the seminary's ills. At first glance, he seems a paradigm of what I would hope from the typical seminarian, out of the midwest and of conservative theological background. If not a genuine venturesome and creative individual--editor of a student publication, etc.--he at least reads the New Yorker. At a second glance, though, he is given over to disillusion--and what I feel are partly self-destructive snipings.

It is just this, unfortunately, that is typical. Even if one-half of the students may labor under the illusion that they're doing serious work, the other half are bummed out on something--though, perhaps for the seminary at large, the symptomatic sniping is aimed at women's issues. Rather than carp and snuffle about a subject that so clearly exposes one's own psychosocial sorespots, I prefer denouncing those seminarians (and faculty) who liberate themselves from responsibility (and rationality) drinking and partying every weekend, a part of the messianic lifestyle I've yet to appreciate.

But, one can exhaust oneself on denunciations (as many generally do). I could suggest that the seminary's problem of community is actually one of identity, that we lack a very inclusive group of role models (and I don't just mean minority faculty), that the seminary focuses on its international responsibilities to the exclusion of more local ones (as a thoughtful friend suggests), and that the admissions office can undo whatever positive changes are achieved here in a year by admitting another group of juniors like me in September. But this sounds too much like a new theological language and I've no desire to be thought a charismatic or a revolutionary.

Obviously, by now it is unnecessary to tell you "where I'm coming from." I am nevertheless surprised at the degree to which I've become radicalized, in attitude if not in action, and am thus paradoxically grate-





ful to the seminary--or to God--for my seminary experience. As for remedies to all of the seminary's problems--I'd recommend first a better analysis than the one above--a good reading of Dr. Winter's inaugural address would be an excellent start. I am comforted by two pieces of knowledge, however: (1) that for the ills of many here my favorite folk remedy--complete ignorance--will be sufficient, and (2) that, to quote T.S. Eliot, "disillusion itself can become an illusion, if one remains in it too long."

Christian T. Iosso

To the Editor:

Although I didn't wish to find it necessary to go over your head on this no alternative turned up. So I've decided to address this to the community at large.

I came to Princeton Seminary to get myself married. I'm a senior already, and I have had a few dates, but nothing serious, you know? And I'm starting to wonder what the trouble could be. Don't tell me it's me, because I'm not the only one. Lots of people are in the same boat. Six thousand bucks in the hole and no fish on the hook.

Even apart from my own sake, my mother deserves more than this. A good part of this investment is hers, not to count getting my teeth straight, even, and how do you think it makes her feel, my being rejected like this, aside from the fact that I'm just a burden to her if I have to come back home? Three of my cousins are married to graduate students. My mother feels like crawling into the woodwork on Sunday afternoons at my grandmother's.

But think of me, too, and how lonely I am. I go to all the parties, I sit in the library lobby, I went on three retreats last year, I even went swimming last Saturday night in a sexy bathing suit. I use the right toothpaste, and nothing comes

of it--of any of it. I deserve something better for having ended up six thousand dollars in debt. And I don't want to be a D.C.E.

(name withheld by request)

### MORN-SUN LAMENT

Through the night for long dour hours  
The muse perused  
Human acumen about the enigma of  
charisma  
And faith atrophied.  
Late his light burned taciturn,  
Shining into the dismal diffusion  
Masking Babel towers of confusion.

In vain, straining  
In the wee-hours waning  
He quit at last amid neighbors  
yammering  
And pipes hammering  
And laydown twisting and winding--  
Not unwound or peace in the darkness finding.  
His musing was muted and mystically  
mixed  
With half-waked dreams meandering,  
And his medusa-mane  
Was swaddled around ears and head  
With his nose peaking  
Amid the curling mass like an iceberg.

As day grew light  
Morning's martyr awoke in bed  
Cursing well at the tolling bell  
Heralding the morning hellfire's  
damnation.  
Rolling over, he looked (bleakly  
blinking)  
At the leprous light leaking  
Through the poorly drawn window  
Blinding his bleary, weary eyes awake.

--Matthew T. Sharp



## THE QUEST FOR THE HISTORICAL CHARISMATIC

*(Benjamin Williams, whose poetry has appeared in recent issues of Viewpoint, claims to have been involved "at all levels" of the charismatic movement for the past six years. He is a graduate of Stetson University and is a senior in the M.Div. program.)*

by Benjamin Williams

At intervals in history, providence graciously, according to ineffable wisdom, bestowed upon the church universal a most precarious blessing. Charismatics. How many godly pastors fervently prayed that their congregations would generously partake of the blessings of Pentecost, only to have their prayers answered in such an alarmingly literal way?

"Charismatics," the appellation currently in vogue, must be recognized as a present and unavoidable phenomenon in the ministry today. The proliferation of slick journals, publishing companies, cassette tape mailing houses, and even television stations, points to a vast and voracious following. Regularly held charismatic meetings are so widespread that it is no longer feasible to print directories.

The term "charismatic" is derived from the Greek word charismata, and is usually translated "spiritual gifts." Specifically, charismata indicates the more sensational manifestations of the power of the Spirit, including healing, miracles, and speaking in tongues. Charismatics are those Christians who are convinced of the present validity of these remarkable manifestations and who practice them.

Due possibly to a still dominant rationalistic bias against fantastic and unfamiliar experiences, the traditional theological enterprise has constructed a one-sided truce giving rise to a dangerous silence. The absence of investigation and education

gave birth to stereotypical myths about charismatics; the oral tradition is now embellished and formalized. It is the strange lot of the human imagination to create phantasms out of the darkness.

Infections can heal only if opened up to the air, and the sense of alienation between charismatics and the historic churches can be reconciled only when the myths are exposed. While it must be acknowledged that they may have originated in historical events, the myths should not be considered normative; sadly, the most memorable example is the bad one. But pastors and pastors-to-be will not be able to effectively guide this peculiar people until some distinction has been made between the mythic representation and the normative historical impulses in the charismatic consciousness.

The Personal Myth: "Charismatics are ecstasies"

During the Pentecostal revivals of the early twentieth century, adherents were unceremoniously dubbed "holy rollers." The oral tradition of our own day prefers more sophisticated titles: "ecstasies" and "enthusiasts." Nevertheless, these names perpetuate the myth that charismatics engage in a half-frenzied Bachanalia of the spirit. Charismatics refer to themselves with penetrating satire as "charis-maniacs."

The myth of ecstasy assumes a variety of paradigms. Grosser forms cite rolling on the floor or swinging from the chandeliers. Psycho-social models assert that the steady rhythm and repetition of songs combine with auto-suggestion to induce a temporary state of oblivion. Many people suppose tongues-speaking demonstrates severe emotional instability.

Our cultural canons of rationalist technocracy often preclude emotion, so many charismatics do find in the experience of the spirit an exhilarating liberation and affirmation of their emotions;

however, the reality seldom approaches the mythic caricature. Throughout worship and the administration of the "gifts," charismatics remain consciously in control of their faculties; "speaking in tongues" requires no psychic or emotional intensification and can be exercised at will. The charismatic phenomena are entirely volitional.

The historical charismatic is not flawless in personal faith; the experience of electrifying power, particularly among those for whom it is new, is potentially an embarrassingly indiscrete zeal. This naive excitement accounts for many of the badly timed abuses popularized by scare stories. And perhaps emotional excesses are actually a result of zeal misdirected by the myth itself.

#### The Social Myth: "Charismatics are Divisive"

The myth of divisiveness is a blatant oversimplification of profounder social processes. There are examples of schismatic charismatic factions, but sometimes the myth itself induces opposition and expulsion. In the polarization of charismatics and non-charismatics, both parties are culpable.

The charismatic sin is insecurity with the new religious identity; the excited, "don't you want this too," gives way to an uncertain, "why don't you have it?" Freud observed that new subscribers to any creed often feel they must legitimate their convictions at any cost. Contact with those of a similar experience can provide needed reinforcement, but those of different experience constitute a threat. Identity becomes a humorless pitched battle.

Thus the insecurity can be destructively manifested as defensive aggression and judgment. "This church is dead" and "you're not filled with the spirit unless you speak in tongues" betray a deep personal uncertainty in search of remedial reinforcement. But by this negativity, insecurity tragically actualizes the worst fears of rejection.

Non-charismatics may respond out of

fear, perhaps of the impending loss of control and credibility which charismatics popularly represent. Some genuine abuses or aggression may cause alarm, but the myths themselves are most frightening; imagination constructs an independent reality. Confrontation with the unfamiliar is the bogie man, once suspected to exist, now threatening to leap from the closet.

These vague fears are manifested as avoidance. If it is ignored, it will not disturb. Dinner-table talk may briefly record that poor-so-and-so has gotten religion, and the topic is dropped; condescension occurs from a safe distance.

Judgmental insecurity and frightened avoidance becomes an explosive mixture. And as charismatics and non-charismatics begin gravitating toward their respective common-identity groups for corporate reinforcement, a radical polarization results. While this is not intended to be an inviolable schematization, it does demonstrate the complexity of the schismatic impulse.

#### The Theological Myth: "Charismatics are unitarians of the Spirit"

The charge of unitarianism of the spirit is without basis. Having fallen heir to evangelical fundamentalism by default, normative charismatic theology centers on christology, albeit triumphalistic christology. The task of the spirit is to glorify and witness to Jesus, and if the spirit is sought it is for that purpose. If a member of the trinity is neglected, it would be the "Father," with corresponding neglect of covenant-responsibilities and social justice. Although trinitarian in intent, charismatics may tend rather toward an evangelical binitarianism.

When the charismatic renewal erupted within the Roman Catholic Church, a papal encyclical recommended that "prudent priests" become involved so that adequate oversight could be provided. As a result, the Catholic charismatics have developed



a firmer theological base and have remained within the church. The Catholics recognized a tremendous potential that needed harnessing.

As long as Protestant ministers believe the myths, charismatics will perpetuate the myths. If a pastor does not direct their eager but ambiguous energies, and affirm their Christian experience and identity, charismatics will be forced to look elsewhere for reinforcement. A pastor who abdicates the responsibility of theologically educating charismatics in the congregation ought not be surprised when they import a fundamentalist theology. Charismatics can learn how to live responsibly under grace only when someone will care enough to teach them.





